JÖRLI

OR

THE STAUFFER MILL

JOHANNA SPYRI

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SHE HAD FETCHED DOWN THE OLD INSTRUMENT AND UNROLLED THE RIBBON

JÖRLI

OR

THE STAUFFER MILL

BY

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BLANCHE GREER

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THE STAUFFER MILL

CHAPTER I

A RESOLUTION

QUITE a distance above Gesteig, a tiny mountain hamlet, stands a lonely hut. Right beside it a path leads up to the high mountains and a gay stream rushes headlong to the valley. One bright summer evening old Lucas sat on the narrow wooden bench beside the door. He watched the full moon rising from behind the mountain and gradually spreading its light over the peaks and valleys. Lucas had been a well-known mountain guide in those parts, but was now old and had gradually been obliged to give up his work to the younger men. Here and there, he still could take parties on short trips when he did not have to carry burdens, but this hardly happened any more. He had become too feeble for his work.

"Come here, Jörli," he now called to a boy

who seemed busy with some task beside the stream, "I have to talk to you."

"I'll be there in a minute, grandfather," the boy called back, sliding about on his knees in order to speed his work. In a little while he came running to the bench. Despite the cool evening breeze his cheeks were glowing and his large eyes shone like blue flames in the moonlight.

"Oh grandfather, the wheel won't work. If only I could see how they work it in a mill," said Jörli, pushing his light hair from his hot face.

"Sit down beside me, that will cool you off. I must tell you something," said the grandfather, and Jörli sat down. "Do you see how beautiful the moon is to-night? Eight years ago, just after your father died, it looked down on us exactly that way from the same spot. I remember so well when I brought you here on my back, and I like to think of the day when you came to live with me. I have to tell you something which will hurt you, child, and hurts me, too; something I hate to have to tell you.

We had better sing a hymn of praise before I do it."

"Can I go and fetch the mandolin, grandfather?" asked Jörli. "Singing always sounds so much better if I play it."

"Yes, you can, but come right back," the grandfather replied.

The boy obeyed, and in a few moments he was again sitting on the bench. Mandolins were not known in these parts, and his instrument must have been brought from another country. The boy fingered the strings casually but quite cleverly, too. The grandfather began a song with his deep, still vigorous voice and Jörli joined in with bell-like tones, striking the strings correctly at the same time. Both sang:

"My heart leaps high for pleasure,
It knows no grief nor pain,
But sings a merry measure
Like bird-notes after rain."

"Why do we sing such a happy song, grandfather?" Jörli interrupted, "and why do you do it when you have something sad to tell me?"

"I do it for that very reason," replied the

grandfather. "A song of praise brings back confidence and joy into our hearts. It is good to praise and thank God in every situation, and I could tell you something which would show you the truth of what I say. I have more reason to know than anybody else. Let us sing some more."

This they did, but as soon as the song was finished Jörli said quickly, "Grandfather, won't you tell me what you know about songs of gratitude and praise? Why are they suitable just when we are sad? I love to hear stories."

"I meant to talk to you about something else," responded the old man, "but if you want to hear something that happened to me, I'll tell you that first."

Apparently the old man was glad to be able to put off the unpleasant moment. "It must have been about nine years ago," he began, "a year before I brought you home, that I came home from a trip to the high mountain over the Rhone Glacier. I was walking along rather carelessly, for I had often crossed it before, but

some fresh snow had fallen, and I should have been particularly careful. Suddenly I fell into a crevasse in the glacier, one much too deep for me ever to get out of alone. What was I to do? I called out several times, hoping to be heard, but my voice did not carry any distance. I called out louder and louder, but all in vain. Suddenly I thought of singing a song; that would carry further and would seem more connected, too. If anybody happened to come by and saw no one, he would be sure to look where the singing came from. I at once began to sing my favorite song as loudly as I could:

'Let all give thanks to God
With heart and hand and voices!
What wonders He hath wrought!
In Him His world rejoices.
He from our childhood still
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And ceaseth not to-day.'

"With these words faith in God came back to my heart. I was able to repeat it with much more strength and assurance than before. The first time my voice had sounded pinched, while

now it had a ring of courage. Suddenly I heard voices above me and soon they came nearer and nearer. Next a rope was let down, and a voice called out to me to fasten this under my armpits. I replied that I understood what to do and begged them to pull me up. A few vigorous pulls and I was saved. The men were both guides I knew, and one of them asked me, 'Did you lose your mind from fright, Lucas? How could you sing a hymn of gratitude and praise when you were so near your last hour?'

"'No,' I replied, 'I had full command of my senses, but I'll sing you another right away, and I'll always do so for the rest of my life in all situations. That song made me trust in God and gave me the strength to sing loudly enough for you to hear me. That alone has saved me.' I at once began to sing it over, and both men joined in. You can imagine how joyously I could praise the Lord now, for to stand once more on the firm ground under His deep-blue sky made me blissfully happy. Thinking of my wonderful escape just now, Jörli, has

once more given me confidence in our good Father in heaven, and I'll tell you at once what you have to know. You see, when I brought you home I was still able to climb the mountains and earn some money. Also old Lene, who owns the little house, looked out for you and kept you from falling into the stream beside which you were always playing. We never could get you away from there."

"I know. I was always trying to make mill-wheels even then," Jörli interrupted. "Just the same I can't make them right yet."

"I know, but listen to me now," the old man continued. "After a few years I could only take smaller trips, because the long excursions were too tiring for me, and since last year I can't even undertake those any more. The little bit I had saved up is all gone now, for we had to live while I earned practically nothing. Meanwhile old Lene has grown very infirm and she told me to-day that she couldn't manage by herself any longer. She is planning to ask her young cousin in Gesteig to come with his wife and live with her. That means we

have to go, for there won't be any room for us any more in the house. If I were still vigorous and young, that wouldn't worry me at all, but I can't expect to get any more work here. Who should give it to me? And besides, I don't even know if I could do it properly. I had hoped I could help Lene with her bit of land and her two goats, and she would let us stay till you were able to earn your living. I know I shall not last much longer."

"Oh, I can earn money for you now, grandfather. Just see, I am nearly as tall as you," said Jörli, stretching himself as much as possible. "I can work for both of us, I am sure. I'll go to look for work to-morrow morning, and old Lene simply has to keep you here till I have earned something and can pay her. I'll bring it up to you, and I promise to work till I can do it. Just wait and see, grandfather."

The boy's happy assurance relieved the grandfather's fears. "That is right," he said, "just be confident and don't lose your faith in God, for He will help you when the time comes. Don't forget to pray, either, Jörli. You aren't

so little any more, it is true. You must be nearly twelve, for you were about four years old when I brought you home. Set out then to look about, and I am sure Lene will keep me a little longer. If you find no work, you can come back here, and we'll go and look about together. If people see me crawling around as slowly as I am obliged to do nowadays, they might give me work out of sheer pity."

"Will you let me take the mandolin?" asked Jörli anxiously.

"You can take it if you want to, for it belongs to you," replied the grandfather. "But remember that it will be a burden for you to carry and you might be sorry you dragged it along."

"Oh no, never. I am sure I sha'n't," said Jörli with assurance. "I simply couldn't stand being so far away from you if I didn't at least have my mandolin, grandfather."

"Take it then, take it," the old man answered, realizing that this reminder of home might prove a comfort for the lad. "It certainly is a curious instrument," he added,

examining the old mandolin while Jörli was softly playing a melancholy tune. "I don't see how you can make these sounds," said the grandfather. "You seem to be born to do it, for I never could have shown you how. But even when you were a tiny boy of six and I sang to you, you were able to pick out the right notes on the instrument, and you sang and played both. Yes, it was wonderful, and you have gotten better every year since then."

"I just love my mandolin, grandfather. I love it best in the world after you," Jörli declared.

Meanwhile the moon had traced her white path across the sky and the hour when they usually retired to rest was past.

The grandfather got up. "Come, Jörli, it is late, we must go to bed. You needn't set out to-morrow. We'll wait till the day after. How empty it will seem up here without you, child!"

"Then you'll have to sing your songs, grandfather, and that will make you happy again," Jörli consoled him, following the old man into the hut.

CHAPTER II

JÖRLI LOOKS FOR WORK

It was a bright summer morning when Jörli stood before the hut ready for his journey. An old leather bag which the grandfather had used on ever so many mountain climbs hung on his back. It held his second suit, a shirt, and some stockings. Jörli wore a pair of good shoes, which the grandfather had bought him lately for the trip. At the boy's side hung the mandolin.

"Go, and stay a good boy, Jörli. You owe it to your grandfather," said old Lene, who also came out to say good-bye.

"Farewell, Jörli," said the old man, holding the boy's hand for a while. "Keep God in mind, and when things go badly with you, sing a beautiful song. That will bring back confidence into your heart. Be sure to keep your firm faith in God, then everything will go well."

After once more giving the grandfather his

hand, Jörli set out. He didn't want the old man to see the tears which were beginning to choke him.

Jörli didn't take long to go down the mountain over the smooth pasture-land. The sun was shining and the birds whistled in the branches. Jörli's heart grew lighter. As the boy had set out immediately after sunrise, it was still quite early when he came to the wide road which led from Gesteig to Interlaken. After walking another stretch he saw the large imposing hotels of Interlaken. Crowds of well-dressed people strolled about in the tree-bordered avenues, while others sat on benches under the shady walnut-trees. These sights made Jörli happy and confident. He thought that he would easily find some work in a place where there were so many people. Probably there would be more work than he could do. He entered the very first inn, and seeing a waiter carrying a large tray heaped with plates, he at once inquired, "Can I find some work here, do you think? I could help you carry these at once."

"Off with you and get out of my sight at once! We need no vagabonds here," cried the waiter, threatening the boy with his sharp glances as well as his rude words. Jörli ran out, much frightened. After going a few steps he came to a long building with high windows, which also proved to be a hotel. An enormously fat man with his hands in his pockets stood in the wide doorway. As the frightened boy was approaching, the heavy man looked at him calmly. This must be the innkeeper himself and he won't be so cross to me as the waiter was, thought Jörli. Coming up to the door, Jörli felt encouraged by the man's imperturbable calm.

"Can you give me some work, please? I'll do everything as it should be done," the boy began, while the man examined him from head to foot and once more from his feet up to his head. But the innkeeper shook his head.

"We have no work here for half-grown boys and idle music-makers," he said at last. Jörli still waited a little, for the man had talked very slowly and Jörli hoped he might

add something. But nothing more came. Then the man slowly pulled one hand from his pocket and with his thick thumb pointed up the street. This meant, "Go along now." Jörli left. Round the next house was a garden. Jörli had hardly entered it, when a woman called to him from a window, "No, no, don't make any music!"

"I haven't come to make music. I want to ask for work," explained Jörli.

"There is no work here for you. Shut the garden door!" With this the woman shut the window.

Jörli's courage began to fail him a bit. If he could find no work here, where there was so much life, where else could he expect to find it? However, there were many, many houses left where he had not asked yet, big ones and small ones, and he would keep on. The very next house might be the right one, who knew? But he was mistaken. He was sent away from there, too, as before. The boy wandered down the long street, asking for work in every single house and was refused in every place. After

going through the town he came to the open country.

He resolved to try a farm, for there must be plenty to do here in the middle of summer. An old house with a large roof standing in the middle of a meadow beckoned to him with its homelike air. Through the open door he saw the farmer's wife cooking at the broad kitchen range. An inviting odor of baking greeted him.

"Can you give me some work?" Jörli asked without going into the kitchen. The woman was busily running about with a pot in each hand.

"If you come in the fall you can pick up apples and pears for us," she said with a quick glance at the questioner. "There isn't anything to do now for the likes of you," she added, at once going on with her work. Before going Jörli once more drew in the fragrant odor, for he had had nothing to eat since his cup of milk and potatoes at five that morning. It was noon now and he had been on his feet ever since. He looked back once more, but the woman had no time to think of anything

but the midday meal she was preparing for her workmen. She did not notice the boy's longing look, and he was obliged to go on. He did not want to beg, because his grandfather had brought him up to think it a shameful thing for people to do when they were able to work. Knowing himself fit for work, he started off again. He saw several smaller houses at a distance from the road, but where there was so little land there could not be much work, thought Jörli. At last he came again to a large farm, where two huge oxen were just being harnessed to an immense hay-wagon. "This means that they are going to fetch in the hay," said Jörli to himself. "There must be some work here," he added, vigorously striding up to the house. He at once recognized the master by the orders he was giving to his men.

"May I go along and work for you?" asked Jorli, confidently approaching the master. "I can do haying well, for I always helped grandfather at it."

"I know the kind you are," replied the farmer, casting a scornful look at the mando-

lin and going right on talking to his men, hereby clearly showing that he wished to have no more dealings with the lad. Very much cast down, Jörli kept walking down the road, and though he inquired for work everywhere, he did so ever more timidly. He always received the same answer, and on the largest farms from which he had the biggest hopes he was sent away with the shortest words. The sun was nearly setting and he was still journeying on. Weariness and hunger began to pain the boy considerably. He would soon be too tired to walk further, and then he would have to sit down by the roadside and die. This sudden vision gave Jörli such a shock that he could not go on for a while. He sat down by the highway and began to think of his grandfather up on the bench beside the hut. He was sure the old man was wondering how he had succeeded in his quest. Jörli suddenly thought that the moment had come for him to sing a song of praise and gratitude just as his grandfather had explained to him. When he was going to begin, he found it much more difficult

than the old man had found it in his glacier crack. Jörli could not even start, for the notes stuck in his throat. He now took up the mandolin, hoping that would help him. He could not help thinking of all the contemptuous glances which had been cast at his dear old instrument, and he said comfortingly, "I don't care how much they despise you; I love you just the same, and I won't ever leave you behind me, no, not even if they chase me away for your sake." He began to touch the strings, but they had never sounded so sad as this before. When he attempted to begin a song in order to make it sound more cheerful, all his painful experiences of the day suddenly overpowered him, and he sobbed aloud at the recollection of his life with his grandfather. He simply could not sing, and the mandolin only accompanied his loud weeping. This was not at all the way the grandfather had done when he fell into the crack, and yet Jörli had the beautiful blue sky overhead and was standing on solid ground. The boy did not wish to be ungrateful. With a new effort he began to sing one of the songs

HE GOT UP AND HUNG THE MANDOLIN AROUND HIS SHOULDER

of praise his grandfather had taught him. He actually sang every verse of it and soon his mandolin began to give forth brighter sounds. The last verse even came out quite vigorously:

"I thank Thee for Thy boundless grace,
My prayer Thou still dost heed.
None strive in vain who seek Thy face;
Thou helpest all in need."

When Jörli had sung these words, cheerfulness again reigned in his heart, for he knew once more whence help could come to him in his utter loneliness. He laid aside his mandolin, and folding his hands, looked up at the sky and prayed: "Oh dear God, let me call to Thee, for I know Thou wilt not forsake me when I am so alone."

These fervent words gave him new courage. He got up, hung the mandolin around his shoulder, and confidently pursued the road once more. From time to time he looked up to the pale evening sky and sang loudly and joyously:

"None strive in vain who seek Thy face;
Thou helpest all in need."

CHAPTER III

A DOOR IS OPENED

Not far from the spot where Jörli had been sitting miserably on the ground a rushing stream poured downhill to the near-by lake of Thun. Shaded by old luxurious walnut-trees stood a mill with solid walls and high gabled roofs. The great wheel was turning round and round and large sacks of wheat were carried in. Then the fine white flour was packed into fresh bags, stacked high, loaded in wagons, and driven out of the courtyard by four powerful white horses. Whoever came near this large mill imagined that there must be plenty of life and activity in the house as well as the mill-works. But people were wrong in that. The owner of the Stauffer mill always went silently from one building to the other and never said a word except an occasional reproof to his workmen —"Well, why isn't this finished yet?" or else he would startle a miller lad in passing by a quick, "Go and do it better." The miller un-

derstood his business well enough, but he did not seem to rejoice in his fine property and splendid mill. A hidden sorrow seemed to be sapping his vitality and spirits. Neither was his wife the merry woman she had been years ago when the young people of all the neighborhood loved to gather at the mill, where they could be so happy, for the mistress always had some new pleasure or surprise ready for them all. The only son of the house, for whom she loved to give these festivities, was acknowledged by everybody to be the smartest, merriest lad, and no other would have fitted so well into the beautiful mill as he did. "You should have seen how we used to live here sixteen years ago, and all the feasts and jollities we used to have," the old serving-maid often said to the young woman who had lately been engaged to help her. The two women had just cleaned the yard with their brooms and were going into the house when the elder made this remark again. That moment the miller came walking across the yard with gloomy eyes and his head bowed low. "We had quite a differ-

ent life then," continued the maid as soon as he had disappeared in the stable. "The young son was still here then, and he was so handsome and kind, besides, that everybody had to like him. You have no idea how proud his parents were of him. Oh, yes, they were entirely different in those days. You should have seen how the miller's wife could laugh with her boy and how proud the miller looked when he saw his son jump to the loaded wagon and sit on top so smart and full of life. It actually was a pleasure to see him drive away with the four white horses."

"Did he die?" asked the young girl.

"He went away to foreign parts in order to learn more about his trade and he never came back," the older woman answered. "Of course he is dead, for they never even speak his name. Both the miller and his wife felt it so deeply that they were unable to mention it to anybody."

"I often wonder why the mistress always goes to the attic every evening after sunset," the young girl began again. "She stands there

at the open window and looks—well, as if she were seeing something quite special. Once when I stood below, I saw her open the shutter and lean away out, but I couldn't see what she was looking for."

Just then the two maids heard their mistress climbing up the stairs. "Do you hear her?" said the young one.

"It isn't our business what she is looking for. Go now and fetch in the water. Everything must be ready when she comes down again," retorted the older woman, quickly going into the kitchen.

From her window the miller's wife could overlook a large extent of road, as it looped out like a white ribbon between the dark forests. In order to see both sides of the road she leaned away out over the edge. She gazed first in the direction of the forest, then towards the lake. She was on the point of stepping back and closing the shutter, when she looked out once more and gazed attentively at the road. "No, it is nothing; he is much too little. He isn't coming yet," she whispered hurriedly to herself,

wiping a tear from her cheek and shutting the shutter. The figure the woman had seen was Jörli's small figure walking along the highway. He suddenly stood still and listened.

"Oh, here is a mill!" he exclaimed joyfully. "If only I can see the wheel before it gets too dark!"

With this he turned from the road and ran towards the stream, where he could watch the fine large wheel whipping the waves with its enormous paddles. Jörli stood gazing at it in complete absorption, for ever since he had been old enough to think he had always longed to see a mill-wheel working. The grandfather had shown him how to make small wooden wheels for streams and had explained that mills with their giant wheels worked on the same principle. Jörli was amazed. If only he could have a little peep inside the building and see how the wheat was ground and the machinery fitted together which ground the coarse grain into fine white flour! This wish grew so powerful that he forgot everything else. It happened that the miller had seen the boy run-

ning to the side of the stream. He took him for a beggar, and when Jörli vanished behind the mill he followed him to see what the small vagabond wanted. But Jörli was so deeply lost in contemplation that he did not notice that some one had approached. The miller was much struck by the boy's quite evident admiration. "What are you thinking about?" he suddenly asked.

Jörli was dreadfully startled, but finally gathered courage to reply, "If only I could see how the wheel grinds the wheat into flour!"

"Where is it you belong?" asked the miller in a not unfriendly fashion, walking in the direction of the courtyard. Jörli followed, suddenly conscious again of why he was travelling alone. When they had reached the yard, the miller stood still and looked the boy over.

"I am looking for work, sir," said Jörli. "Do you think you could give me some work in the mill?"

That moment the miller caught sight of the mandolin and his tone completely altered. "So

you are one of those!" he cried. "Off with you and don't let me find you here again."

Jörli was so taken aback by these angry words that he remained immovable.

"Did you understand me or not? Must I chase you off then?" cried the man wrathfully. "Come, Sultan, chase him away."

A large dog, who had already been growling, jumped up and flew at the lad with terrible barks. Jörli turned and ran out of the yard with a cry. The miller's wife, who had heard her husband's angry words and the boy's outcry, came running out of the house.

"How can you be so cruel to a child, Stauffer?" she said with spirit. "What harm has the boy done you?"

"He is one of those confounded musicians," cried the miller as he ran excitedly to the stable. His wife at once went out on the road, and after looking about saw Jörli walking not far from her. His gait was very slow, for his recent fright, added to his weariness, had nearly prostrated the poor boy. When the

woman kindly called him back, Jorli stopped irresolutely.

"Come back!" she cried, "you needn't be afraid. I'll take you into the house with me." As he slowly turned, she asked with sympathy, "Are you tired? Where do you come from?"

"From the mountain on the other side of Gesteig," he answered. "I left home this morning at five o'clock."

"But you couldn't have walked all the way?" said the woman.

"Yes, I did. I only sat down once beside the road," said Jörli, thinking of how he had wept and sung.

"I suppose you ate your lunch then?" inquired the miller's wife.

"No, I didn't have anything to eat," replied the lad.

"What, you haven't eaten since this morning? I don't see how you can still stand up," exclaimed the woman. "Come child, follow me into the house."

As they crossed the yard, angry Sultan came tearing toward them. But his mistress

cried out with a commanding gesture, "Stop, Sultan, be quiet!" and the dog at once crept into his kennel without a sound. They came into a large, homelike room, where a long table was spread for the miller lads, with seats at the head of the board for the master and mistress. Leading Jörli to a small table, the woman said kindly, "The others are not coming yet, but you must have something to eat at once."

The serving-maid now brought in what the mistress had ordered. Jörli got a heaped plateful of milk porridge, and while he was enjoying it, the kind mistress spread butter on a piece of bread and laid a slice of ham on it. She now lit a lamp, for it had grown quite dark. "I must see what you look like," she said slowly, and began to carefully examine him. There must have been something she liked about him, for she looked at him steadily without saying a word. Her glances were so friendly that Jörli began to feel happier and he ate his supper in comfort.

"You look as tidy as if your mother had

dressed you this morning," began the mistress, "and you don't seem like a strolling musician who climbs mountains and plays for strangers in order to sleep on the straw only to leave next morning."

"I am not one of those," said Jörli. "My grandfather's name is Fretz and he is a guide. I have always lived with him. He told me to put on my good things this morning and to pack the other ones in my bag. He said I wouldn't get work otherwise."

"Where are you supposed to work?" the miller's wife wanted to know.

Only then she discovered that Jörli had no idea where to go nor where to spend the night. To the woman's question why he had to leave his grandfather so young, the boy related that his grandfather was too old to climb mountains and had no more money for them to live on. Besides this, there would be no more room in the cottage for them, because old Lene was taking some relatives into the house.

"Why are you carrying this instrument

about with you?" the miller's wife inquired further.

"Because I am so fond of it," he explained, "and because I can sing better when I play it. Grandfather taught me a lot of songs."

"I see. What kind of songs did your grandfather teach you?" she inquired.

Having finished his meal, Jörli was full of good spirits and of gratitude. He therefore began at once to sing a happy song of praise. His mandolin also sounded livelier than it had done for a long while.

"Your grandfather taught you a very fine thing," said the woman, herself rejoicing in the comforting words of the song. "I like your voice. You must sing for me again. But come, give me your mandolin now, for I must put it away." The woman quickly seized the instrument and put it high up in a cupboard, for she had heard the miller's step outside.

"Won't I ever get it back?" asked Jörli with a sad glance towards the cupboard.

"Oh yes, but not right away. I do it for

your own good, remember that," she quickly added.

Jörli was so convinced of this that he felt comforted at once. The miller now entered and looked with flashing eyes first at the boy, then at his wife.

"You are mistaken, Stauffer," she said calmly, "the boy is no strolling musician at all. His grandfather is a guide from the mountains over there. The boy is looking for work and he has no place to spend the night. He shall stay here to-night, for we never send honest people away from here, I know that, and this lad and his grandfather are that kind."

The miller said not a word, but he watched her take the boy's hand and lead him out. She took him to a large room upstairs with a splendid bed. "Sleep well," she said sweetly. "What is your name?—Sleep well, Jörli, and to-morrow we shall see where you are to go." She gave the boy her hand and looked so affectionately into his eyes that he felt completely at home.

By the time the miller's wife came down

again, supper was ready, and when the men and lads had left the room after the meal, she sat down with her husband at a small table. She handed him his pipe and tobacco, and poured out a little glass just as she did every night. When both were comfortably settled, she said, "Now we'll talk about the boy. Did you notice what a nice, good face he has. And something else, too; he has a way of looking at one—like —oh, I can't say who."

"Why does he carry that instrument?" asked the miller sharply.

"But Stauffer, haven't you been a boy, too, once? Don't you know how boys are?" replied the woman. "Don't they all haul something around with them?—one an old pistol, another a razor, and a third a few lead bullets which tear his pockets. Each one has some treasure he won't give up, even if it is no more than a piece of cobbler's glue with which he mends everything. Don't you remember how you were?"

The miller had to nod, for the description fitted his own recollections.

"Well, that's the way with that boy," the wife continued. "He has somehow gotten hold of the old mandolin, and when he had to go from home, he wouldn't leave it behind; that is all. It is hard and cruel enough for a boy as young as that to have to go out and earn his bread among strangers. I know he has been buffeted about. And now I want to tell you, Stauffer, that I want to keep the boy here. There is plenty of odd work with us in the house and yard, and if he does as well as I expect him to, you'll soon want to have him in the mill."

"Indeed! So you mean to immediately employ a young vagabond about whom you know absolutely nothing. That will have a nice ending!" replied the miller. But his tone had softened somewhat and he was not so angry as soon as he knew the boy was no strolling player. He also remembered the boy's careful contemplation of the mill-wheel and felt more tolerant about the matter. His wife was quick in detecting his altered tone and knew she had won her case without a further battle. This

made her so happy that some of her former good spirits came back and she entertained her husband with many an incident of the past and present times. When the old clock suddenly struck ten, the husband looked up surprised.

"It's been years since I thought it was nine when the clock struck ten," he said. Before going to sleep the wife thought to herself that she would make Jörli sing to her every evening from now on. It had been a long, long time in truth since she had listened to anybody singing or had sung a song herself.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE MILL

Jörli rose early next morning, as was his custom on the mountain. He stood in the yard ready to go away, only waiting to thank the mistress and get back his mandolin. The miller now came out, too, and he could not help liking the boy for being up so early. He returned the boy's greeting in a quite pleasant manner, adding, "Go in, my wife is getting breakfast for you." The woman was busy in the room setting the table when she heard the boy's step. "Come in here," she said kindly. "Look, you are going to sit beside me at table, for you are going to stay here. We can give you work and I am sure you'll do it well."

Jörli could hardly take in this blissful prospect. Could it be true that he would live in the mill and be able to watch its intricate workings? The greatest happiness of all, though, was to be staying with the good, kind woman. He could not say a word, but his eyes shone from pure delight. "Are you glad, Jörli?"

asked the mistress, smiling. "I am glad, for I am pleased, too."

At breakfast, when all her people were gathered, she told them that Jörli belonged to the household now and was to be considered one of them. After the meal she took Jörli to the yard, where big Sultan was sunning himself in front of his kennel. The dog jumped up angrily and growled.

"Come here, Sultan," said the mistress, pointing to Jörli beside her. "Look at him well, Sultan! He belongs to me now and you must lick his hand." With this she very slowly and tenderly stroked the boy's hand. After attentively watching her for a while Sultan came up tamely and did as he was bidden.

"Nice, big Sultan," said Jörli, laying his hand on the dog's head; "we'll be good friends now, won't we?" Wagging his tail, the dog once more licked Jörli's hand.

"He understands, you see, and you may be sure he is going to be a faithful friend now," said the miller's wife, while she petted the dog for reward. Then she walked on, for she wanted to show Jörli all the various sheds and

places in the yard. Next she led him to the cellar, and last all through the house. As she wanted to train him for her personal servant and companion, she wished him to know where everything was kept in the house. Jörli had his eyes wide open and took notice of everything the woman showed him. After inspecting the living-rooms and explaining everything there, she took him to the attic. Here she quickly opened the shutter and looked up and down the highway, not saying a word, however. Jörli, thinking he was meant to do the same, came close to the woman and also looked out. "Oh, the shutter is going to fall!" he cried suddenly, taking hold of it with all the strength he had. The woman, seeing the great danger, took hold of it, too.

"Oh, run as fast as you can, Jörli, and bring one of the men up, but fetch a strong one. The shutter is terribly heavy and might easily kill somebody." Jörli flew down the stairs. "That comes from having my thoughts elsewhere," said the miller's wife to herself. "I have opened it every day and didn't notice how loose it was."

Quicker than she had thought possible, help arrived. This was lucky, for strong as the woman was, she could not have held the enormous oaken shutter very long in her present awkward position. Jörli had, with good judgment, picked out the right man at once, namely, the carpenter, who was working below in the mill-works. In that way the matter was at once repaired. The miller's wife was so filled with the event and the lucky prevention of a possible disaster that she at once sought out her husband. She told him what a support their house had gained in Jörli and she had so much to say about the boy's sharp wits, his cleverness and ability to think things out for himself, that the miller answered dryly, "Look out, or you'll have to take back most of these praises in a week. This is only his first day here, remember that."

But this made no impression on the wife. She would never have to give up the good opinion she had already formed of Jörli, and nobody could ever tear from her heart the love she felt towards him. In her joy she told her two maid-servants how lucky it was Jörli

should have come to them, adding that the boy was accurate and clever in both his work and judgment, chiefly because he had his whole mind on what he was doing instead of letting it wander to a thousand other things. The servants did not like to hear such praise. There had been nothing wrong with the house before the young straggler had come, and it was obvious that the mistress meant the last remark for them. This made them furious, and they resolved to make Jörli pay for this.

Things went better with Jörli every day, for he soon knew all the ropes of the household and where everything was kept. His mistress was able to rely on him as she did on herself, so that he soon became her right hand. Her love for him made her constantly talk to her husband about the boy. The miller would listen silently. "Eight days are not up yet, remember," he would say.

When a little more than a week had passed, early one morning the miller met Jörli in the yard. The boy was coming from the chickens and ducks in the back yard, for they had been given to Jörli to take care of.

"Twenty little chickens crept out of their eggs last night," he cried triumphantly.

"It seems to me you are pleased with your new family," said the miller. "Don't you ever long to see what goes on in my mill? Would you like to come with me and see it?"

Jörli's face beamed with joy. He had long wished to do so, but the big miller lads had not shown him any friendliness and he still felt quite shy of his master. He had therefore not ventured nearer the mill than the open door, through which he had peeped.

"Come, then," said the miller, understanding the boy's silent reply.

After hesitating a moment Jörli asked shyly, "May I first go and tell mistress about the little chickens? Or can't I go if I don't go now?"

"Run along and tell her! Apparently the family comes first," said the miller, while a smile flitted over his features, something Jörli had never been before. The boy speedily dashed away to bring his mistress the happy news and soon bounded back to the mill. Meanwhile, all the men had arrived and the whole

mill-works were humming with activity. The miller took Jörli all over the building and gave detailed answers to the boy's eager inquiries. Not a leather strap or funnel escaped the lad's keen attention, and he tried to find out the object of every wheel and engine. A particularly intricate machine was in charge of an unusually tall lad, called "Long Kaspar" for his great height. Jörli gazed at this in silent wonder. Then, kneeling down, he watched it sort the different grades of flour. The miller left the boy to his contemplation for a moment, and when he returned, Jörli, still lost in admiration, said, "If this strap were fastened tighter back there, it would turn round much faster; the whole thing seems to stop entirely every once in a while."

The miller stepped closer to examine the matter.

"What are your eyes for if you don't use them?" the miller said angrily to Long Kaspar. "Aren't you ashamed to think this boy, who is looking at this for the first time, can see what is wrong at once, and you let it go on like this? You've worked with it for years,

and yet you don't know when it needs attention." The miller set the matter straight himself and went on with Jörli. Long Kaspar sent a furious glance after the boy.

When the inside of the building had been inspected, the master took the boy outside and showed him the workings of the wheels. For this Jörli showed an especially keen enthusiasm. Hadn't he spent whole days at his streamside, thinking out wheels and works as intricate as these?

"Now you have seen everything, I'll give you some work. I want to see how you do it," said the miller.

They went in again and Jörli was soon absorbed in his new task.

Eight days had gone by and the mistress knew well enough why she had lost Jörli. Whenever she called him she was told he was busy in the mill with the master. She missed the boy dreadfully and could not help wishing to have him back. Just the same, knowing where he was, she could not help rejoicing at the thought that her husband would now have a chance to find what Jörli amounted to and

THE MASTER TOOK THE BOY OUTSIDE AND SHOWED HIM THE WORKINGS OF THE WHEELS

what a treasure he was. This had gone on for a week and her husband had never said a word about the lad. However anxious she was to know how Jörli was making out in his new work, she restrained herself. She knew her husband would not give her a definite answer till eight days were up. Before that time her husband would give no verdict.

At last Saturday came and she had settled down at the little table beside the miller. "Well, what do you think of Jörli?" she asked eagerly. "You seemed to have him about you a lot last week."

"There's never been one like him, I can tell you that," the miller answered instantly, for he had been waiting to be questioned. "I have never met his like. He has eyes like a falcon, which see at a glance what is wrong, and not only that but he also knows how to put things straight. I've never known such a thing to happen in a young fellow who has absolutely no experience of the trade. He seems to have been born a miller. And to think that he should be nothing to me at all! No, he is a poor fellow without a home. Oh, oh!" sighed the miller

deeply. "I have only known one other, yes, one with eyes like an eagle, too, and hands capable for any work. Whatever that one undertook succeeded and he could do just about anything he took up. But to think what he did want! Oh, it is too dreadful!" groaned the miller in his misery.

The woman here felt urged to interrupt her husband. He had grown more and more agitated and she realized that he had not talked so much at a stretch for years. "Stauffer," she said, "we must let bygones be bygones and be glad that the poor little boy happened to come to us. We both need him and he is useful to us. Let us both share him! You keep him one day in the mill and I'll have him with me in the house the next day. That will make us both happy and he can learn everything."

"What do you mean?" retorted the husband. He had not shown such animation for a long while. "There is nothing more for the boy to learn here, for he did everything better in eight days than your two maids, who have been here eight years. I've had a good look myself at the duck and chicken yard. Not since

we've had the yard has everything there looked so spick and span. The boy knows better than any one here that one must get up early with the sun. He always gets to the mill before anybody—that is the way to really learn. I'll make him into the best miller lad I ever had, and perhaps even let him learn mechanics. I have lately thought a lot about enlarging the business. No, you must give him up. I need him every day. He must learn the trade thoroughly."

The woman gave up fighting for the lad at once, for she was only too glad he had won over her husband so completely. Her husband had not been so eager and animated since he had lost their only son. She hoped, however, to find ways and means to get Jörli back, for she had no intention of giving him up entirely. She would content herself for the present with their evenings together, when Jörli sang her his songs on the bench before the house. This had become her happiest hour. She only let Jörli sing when the miller had gone indoors, for she knew he could not endure the music yet.

CHAPTER V

CLOUDS

Jörli was quite conscious of the fact that the miller grew more kind to him every day and ever gave him more important work to do. Several times when some machine in charge of much older men had gotten out of order, the miller had called for Jörli and asked him how to set it straight. The confidence and kindness the master showed him pleased Jörli so much that he felt spurred on to work better all the time. He was so anxious to please the miller that he soon knew more about every detail of the works than many lads who had been there for years. Neither did the master conceal the fact that he found Jörli more reliable than the grown-up fellows. This made the latter furious and one and all were filled with a bitter grudge against the newcomer. No one spoke a word with Jörli, and he only got scornful glances from them the minute he entered the mill. This hurt the boy dreadfully and he would have to wipe away a secret tear when-

ever he received a look of contempt or an insult after speaking a friendly word to them. They mostly turned their backs on him and did not answer at all. Long Kaspar, however, was his greatest enemy and the workman's anger grew more evident every time they met. When Jörli passed him he would cry mockingly, "You vagabond, you tramp!" These were words which were particularly bitter to Jörli because they were true. After all, he had no home and had only just happened on the mill by accident. Who knew if he wouldn't be homeless once more and obliged to wander round again when he left the mill? Was he then really a tramp and a vagabond? Though he couldn't help it, the words had such a shameful sound they made him wince with pain every time he heard them. The young girl in the kitchen had also begun to talk to him in the same way. Every time she came near him, she sneered, "You tramp and vagabond," just like Long Kaspar. The maids were clearly on the side of the young men, and the young one had an especial grudge against him, for she had never forgotten her mistress's reproof after

Jörli had come to the house. The elder woman never said anything, but threw him furious glances whenever he appeared. She simply couldn't bear the lad for the position he had made for himself with the family.

Jörli had just gayly come into the kitchen with a basketful of fine fresh eggs which he wanted to show his mistress. He was dreadfully disappointed when she wasn't there, for the maid showed her contempt for him very openly by banging the door shut as soon as he had stepped outside. He went slowly into the hall, hoping to meet his mistress there, for he longed to show her the lovely eggs. That moment the younger maid came running into the hall and collided with him. "Can't you make room, you vagabond?" she cried sharply.

Jörli was entering the mill just as Long Kaspar stepped outside.

"Go and show master that only one of us knows anything about the work! Yes, only the tramp and vagabond!" he said mockingly, shoving the boy aside.

Kaspar had said these words in a low voice

because the miller was inside. Just the same the insult seared poor Jörli's soul. He ran to the duck-pond, which was at the furthest corner of the yard. Here he sat down on a stone beside the pond and began to weep. He had often been tempted to tell his mistress about all the insults he had to bear, because she would surely have protected him. But that would have made them all still more hostile, and he could not have borne that. Till now he had hoped that if he said nothing and remained friendly, they would eventually get kinder too. Instead of that they only grew more scornful and contemptuous, and he knew the reason of this. They had a family and a home and knew where they belonged, while he. . . . Here Jörli was overcome with grief and had to wipe away his tears. Even his chickens over there had a home where they belonged and one could not call them vagabonds. No, he was the only homeless tramp here. At that moment Jörli thought of his grandfather, whom he had quite forgotten while things were going well. But now in his mind he saw the old man vividly before him and felt as if he could actually talk

to him. "Oh, poor grandfather, you don't know where to go to, either," Jörli sobbed, as he suddenly remembered that his grandfather would soon be obliged to leave the little house in the mountains just as he had done, because he was too old to work. What was the old man to do then? "Oh, grandfather, I'll come and help you," cried Jörli the next moment. He jumped up and bounded towards the house.

"Where is mistress?" he asked the elder maid, who was just coming out.

"Is there a fire somewhere, or what is the hurry?" she dryly remarked before going further.

Jörli ran inside and found the miller's wife sitting comfortably in the sunny room. She was slicing beautiful red apples for a pie and her gray cat purred so cosily at her feet that it seemed as if there were nothing else in the world but sunny rooms and pleasant homes. Jörli gazed at the cat as if he meant to say, "You are lucky to be at home here in this splendid room."

"Well, Jorli, what good news do you bring me? Come, take this apple," said the woman,

handing him the best apple she could find. Jörli politely thanked her but did not attempt to eat it.

"I must go back to grandfather at once. I had better go right now, and if I run hard I might get to him to-day."

Jörli had never before shown such agitation and haste. The woman laid aside her knife and looked at him.

"What is the matter with you, Jörli? Did anything happen?" she asked. "Have you had some news from your grandfather?"

"No, but he'll soon have to leave the house, I know, and perhaps he has left already. Oh, he probably doesn't know where to go. I must go and help him," answered Jörli, in great distress of mind.

"I am glad you want to do something for your grandfather, Jörli, but that isn't the way to do it," said the miller's wife firmly. "Just stay where you are and I'll make inquiries regarding your grandfather. We can send him money from time to time and a little later you can go to see him. You have hardly been here

six weeks, and it isn't good to change your work so soon."

Jörli got still more anxious and frightened. "Oh, but I must go, I just have to," he wailed. "Perhaps grandfather is already on the road and everybody is sending him away. He can't work any more and people might call him vagabond and tramp. And he can't help it."

Tears ran ever more plentifully down Jörli's cheeks, completely choking his voice. The woman had never seen the boy so upset. He trembled violently, as if the strain of waiting was too terrible to be borne, and yet he had to obey her. She felt great pity for him.

"Jörli, I'll do everything I can so you can leave to-morrow morning," she said kindly; "but it cannot be to-day, for I must first talk with your master. You can't just run away, he wouldn't like it. You know that. But I promise to take your part and see to it so you can go soon. Dry your tears now, for you shall bring your grandfather a nice sum of money, which will enable him to find a lodging. Then you can come back to us. We won't forget your grandfather, Jörli, for he took good

care of you, and we are grateful he did so." Here Jörli silently left the room.

When the wife was alone with her husband that evening, she told him of Jörli's resolution. The miller at once cried out, "What, does he begin already? Didn't I tell you at once? He is too much like one other I knew who had sharper eyes than I myself, and he seems to be just as restless. No, no, it is out of the question. He must stay here. What? You wish to help him? Just the same, nothing you can say will change my decision. He must stay here. Send the old man some money, for I know he is only too glad the boy is here and able to earn some money. We must send him plenty."

But the miller's wife was obliged to speak against the wishes of her own heart. She remembered Jörli's looks of supplication, and she felt his dreadful agitation. She must help the boy. She showed the miller that he wasn't their own boy and they had no right to keep him when he wished to see his grandfather. Jörli had just been overcome by homesickness and she was sure he would return. Also the

grandfather would send him back. It was wrong to keep him; they must let him go. She talked a long time and got warmer and warmer the more she thought of Jörli's utter confidence in her promise. The miller blew thicker and thicker clouds of smoke from his pipe. After being silent a long while, he said at last as he arose, "Let him go then, if you wish it, but I know he won't come back."

With this prediction the miller left the room. These last words woke a sad memory in the woman's heart. Once before her husband had said the same words, and they had come true. Laying her head on her arm, she wept in bitter sorrow.

CHAPTER VI

JÖRLI TRAVELS TWICE

No ONE who saw the miller's wife busying herself vigorously the next morning would have taken her for the woman who had cried so bitterly the night before. She first packed Jörli's clothes in his knapsack and then added two large ham sandwiches and six hard-boiled eggs, for the little wanderer would frequently get hungry on the long journey ahead of him.

"May God protect you, Jörli! Come back to us soon," she said now, holding out her hand. "Tell your grandfather that you will regularly earn the same sum of money for him that the master has given you just now. Then he'll let you come back, for he can't help being pleased."

Though he had already said good-bye once, Jörli was still holding his mistress's hand. "I want to thank you many hundred times for being so good," he began, but it was clear that something was still troubling him. "What is it, Jörli, do you still want something? Tell me, child," asked the miller's wife kindly.

"May I have my mandolin back?" the boy asked shyly.

"Oh, I quite forgot about it," said the woman. "But why can't we keep it in the cupboard till you come back?"

Jörli pulled back his hand and got ready to go, but big tears stood in his eyes.

"No, no, if you love it so much you must take it along," said the mistress, quickly opening the cupboard. "And when you come back again, Jörli, leave it behind with your grandfather. Your master doesn't care to see it here."

She had meanwhile fetched down the old instrument and unrolled the ribbon in order to hang it round the boy.

"Gracious heavens! that's his mandolin," shrieked the woman so piercingly that Jörli stared at her in fright. "Yes, here is his name, and I was watching him while he scratched it in. Where did you get this mandolin, Jörli?"

"I don't know," replied the boy, still more frightened. "I got it from grandfather and my father had it, too."

"Where did your father live, Jörli? Was

he on the mountain with your grandfather? You don't seem to know anything, child. Just the same your grandfather must know something."

Jörli tried to tell her all he knew, but it had been a long while since his grandfather had spoken of his father. He had never seen his mistress so violently agitated, and he felt scared. Before he had the chance to say anything she had rushed outside. Jörli took up his mandolin now, wondering deeply what name the mistress had discovered that he had never read himself. Yes, here was a name scratched into the corner. The letters were so tiny that Jörli found them hard to decipher. When he at last succeeded, he read, "Melchior Stauffer, Stauffer-Mill, Thun Lake." Had the mandolin belonged to the miller himself? That certainly was his master's name, for Jörli had seen it in black letters on all the flour-sacks. Perhaps the miller couldn't bear to look at the instrument because it had once been stolen from him. The master might even take it away from him and never give it back, thought Jörli. He listened anxiously for his

master's step and trembled at what might happen.

Twice the miller's wife had been obliged to have her husband summoned from the mill, for she did not wish to speak to him before the workmen. When he came out at last, his wife exclaimed at once, "I must have a horse and carriage, Stauffer. I must leave at once, for I have just found the first trace we have had of him for fourteen years. His name is scratched into Jörli's mandolin and there can't be any mistake, for I watched him doing it. The old man must know where Jörli got the instrument, and I have decided to go to him now. Yes, I mean to-day. Perhaps I can find him yet."

The miller shook his head. "It won't do any good," he said dispassionately, but when he turned his back, the woman clutched his sleeve. "Listen Stauffer," she said, "if you won't let me drive, I mean to walk all the way. Nobody can keep me from going to the old man."

The excited woman had spoken so decidedly that the miller saw no way out. Shrugging his

shoulders with pity, he called over to the stable, "Hitch up the brown horse!" In the shortest time the woman was ready, and fetching out Jörli, who had anxiously waited all the time, she bade him climb into the carriage. Then she sat down beside him and they set out, Jörli not knowing what it meant and where they were going. His mistress was so lost in her own thoughts that she didn't speak a word. She had at once taken the mandolin from Jörli. "You might knock it against something," she had said, laying the instrument on her lap. Here she held it very carefully, glancing from time to time at the little name in the corner. When Jörli saw her quickly wiping away a tear, he got dreadfully worried, for he had never seen her do that before. After quite a long time the miller's wife at last turned to the boy and said in her usual friendly manner, "Oh Jörli, I quite forgot that you don't even know where we are going. I am going with you to the grandfather. You must be hungry."

With that she fetched out the sandwiches and eggs and other things which she had hurriedly put into the basket at her feet. "Take all

you want, Jörli, and enjoy it," she urged him.

Jörli began to feel a little more at ease now, for sitting in a carriage and being driven across country by the lively brown horse was a new experience for him. Though his mistress was silent most of the time, every word she addressed to him was as affectionate as ever, and he had given up worrying about her sudden action. Here and there he recognized the places where he had sat down hungry on his journey hither. Here they had sent him away, and there he had wandered along unhappily, tired and losing courage every minute. If only his grandfather wasn't already wandering about alone and forsaken! This thought worried Jörli a good deal and he was glad they were making such rapid progress.

When they reached the inn at Gesteig, the miller's wife got out. "Unharness him and wait here," she ordered the driver. "We'll be back toward evening." Then she set out toward the mountain. "Is it far?" she asked Jörli, who followed.

"About an hour or so, perhaps a little more," said Jörli, not quite sure himself. The

"AND NOW YOU COME TO ME YOURSELF"

woman eagerly climbed the path, not speaking a word all the way. When they had walked longer than Jörli had expected, the boy suddenly cried, "Oh, there, look!" A clear stream was foaming down the incline and he was sure that it was his stream. Also the little cottage above was his old home. Jörli began to run. The grandfather, who must have spied the boy, now came out of the hut.

"Oh Jörli, Jörli, are you really coming? This is like a miracle," cried the old man, pressing the boy's hand. "It is true I always thought I should still see you. Just think! I have to leave to-morrow, and I haven't any idea where to go. I had to sing pretty bravely to-day, I can tell you, in order to keep my faith in God. And now you come to me yourself, like the embodiment of the song of comfort I was singing. Who is the woman, child?" he asked, when the miller's wife also arrived on top.

"You must be Jörli's grandfather," she said, eagerly stretching out her hand. "I am so glad to see you. Your boy has been with us all this time, and we've grown very fond of

him. As he wanted to come to see you, I came along too, for I have something important to ask you."

The old man was going to lead the visitor to the cottage where Lene was, but the woman sat down on the bench outside the house, declaring her wish to stay outside. She had to speak to him alone. She had again taken the mandolin from Jörli and put it on her lap, for the boy had carried it up the mountain.

"Please tell me how you, or I should say Jörli's father, got this mandolin?"

After looking at it thoughtfully the old man answered, "I can't tell you a single thing about it."

"Then I'll have to search somewhere else," said the woman determinedly. "Where did your son die? Where did he live?"

"Well, things are a little different from what you think probably. You see I had no son at all," replied the grandfather slowly.

"Then did Jörli's mandolin belong to your son-in-law? Jörli told me it belonged to his father. Please tell me where he lived? Where can I find him?"

"No, I never had a son-in-law, either," said the old man deliberately.

The visitor looked expectantly at the old man, but he said nothing further.

"I wouldn't pry into your affairs," said the woman with some show of impatience, "but this name here on the mandolin happens to concern me very closely, and I am not going to rest till I know how the instrument has come into your hands. I'll just have to go and inquire further."

"Please tell her everything you know, grandfather, for you have no idea how good and kind she has always been to me," Jörli whispered to the old man. The latter acted very strangely, however. He seemed to hear nothing and he stared at the mandolin as if it were the greatest wonder of the world. One could see that his thoughts returned from years long past when he said at last:

"Is his name really scratched into the instrument? Oh dear, who could have thought of that? And to think how hard we looked through all his pockets and searched through all his clothes, hoping to find some scrap of

paper or some mark. Yes, those monks certainly did try hard. Can it be true you know the name?"

The woman nodded. "Please go on. What more do you know?" she questioned breathlessly.

"Well, lady, if that is so, I'll have to tell you everything, I am sure," said the old man. "And Jörli must hear it too, for he knows nothing either. It happened about eight years ago, quite early in the year when the high mountain passes were entirely snowed in. I had taken two gentlemen over the great Bernard Pass to Orosta and was just starting home across the mountain. The weather was raw and the sky a dark gray, and I said to myself, 'Soon a storm will come; you had better run and get to the top before it begins.' I hurried all I could and after about an hour's climb, just before reaching the summit, I overtook a man who was carrying a small boy on his back. I noticed how hard the stranger was panting. 'Good friend,' I said to him, 'I can see you are having a hard time. Give me the boy for a little while. A bad storm is coming

and we had better hurry.' The stranger had seen it too, and he seemed very grateful when I took the little boy. The sky then grew blacker and blacker. Soon thick flakes began to fall and I had to talk to the young man, for he was near giving up. He seemed quite unable to keep up with me. Though he was still quite young, I noticed that he was ill. Finally I had to pull him along with all my strength, for the storm grew very bad. We got to the top though, and the good monks in the hospice took us in and tried to make us comfortable in front of a roaring fire. But the clothes of the little boy were frozen stiff, and the father was so exhausted that the monks put both in a warm bed. They did everything in their power for them. One of the monks stayed up all night and gave the sick man a strengthening draught from time to time. He had not said a word up till now, but in the night he suddenly showed a desire to talk. The monk could not understand anything, except that the traveller was returning to his parents. He wanted to bring home his little boy and he begged to have his people notified. But just as he was trying to say his

name, his strength gave out and he couldn't do it. After pointing to his things, he fell back and died. The monks said that he had had a stroke. In the morning the little boy lay well and rosy beside his dead father. We searched through all his belongings but couldn't find a name. Oh yes, there were two initials on some of his clothes. The monks were sure some scrap of paper or a wallet would reveal the man's identity, but they looked in vain. The good old prior himself came out to me and said that I must take the little one to the valley, as it was impossible for a child to live up there. Some kind-hearted family would be sure to take the lad. Then he gave me some money for the little one's keep. They decided to exhibit the dead man's body in the hospice and give out a general notice of his death. This would be sure to bring the family. They would come and tell me as soon as this had been accomplished, and I could tell them where the small boy was placed. I took the little one once more on my back and wandered down to the valley with him. He prattled very pleasantly and told me his name

was Jörli. But he didn't know anything more. From time to time he asked longingly for his father, and I had to console him by saying that his father was soon coming. At those times I couldn't keep back the tears, from pity for the little orphan. Soon I grew so fond of him that I decided to keep the boy till his relatives would fetch him, but no news ever came from the hospice, and when I went back there two years later I heard that no one had ever inquired after the dead stranger. Also the prior was satisfied that I had kept the boy myself. The stranger had carried this mandolin and a knapsack, which I took along, for it belonged to the boy. But who could have thought that the name was written on the instrument?"

Hot tears had been pouring down the woman's cheeks. "Jörli, Jörli, come to me," she cried, deeply moved. "Come to me, for I am your grandmother. Yes, you belong to us, and I know now why my heart was always so stirred when you looked at me. Yes, Jörli, you look at me just the way Melchior used to do. You see, Jörli, your father was our son. Yes, he was our Melchior, my beloved son."

The woman was so stirred that the old man also was obliged to wipe his eyes. Jörli, a moment later, clung in mute astonishment to his affectionate grandmother. He looked happier every moment. When the miller's wife had regained control of her emotions, she turned to the guide.

"We owe you a tremendous debt, my friend," she said, offering him her hand, "and I hope God will help us to repay you. But please tell me if you happen to remember anything more about my son. I should treasure even a single word."

The old man tried to think very hard, but upon recalling the scene he knew they had been silent all the way. The storm had been terrific and his companion was too weary to talk. But upon taking the boy on his back he remembered asking the father about the child's mother. His companion had pointed in the direction of Italy and had answered, "Dead and buried in her home." "Oh, now I remember something else," added the old man. "I have a shawl upstairs which Jörli wouldn't take along because he always found it too

warm to wear. But as it is still beautiful, I decided to keep it carefully for him."

The old man went inside and brought out a gray scarf with bright red stripes. The woman knew it at once, for she had knitted it for her son as a gift for the last Christmas he had spent at home. She saw him vividly before her, laughingly putting on the shawl. Her tears fell upon it and she could not speak.

"One who set such store by his mother's gift never did forget her," said the old man comfortingly.

"Now, you must hear something about Jörli's father," the miller's wife said after a considerable pause, "for you can't help wondering how it all happened, and you certainly deserve to be told. Our Melchior was a very clever lad and unusually able in every way. My husband was extremely proud of him, and it was his ambition to have Melchior the most respected miller in the whole countryside. Once we happened to be building an addition to the mill and among the masons was an Italian who could sing like a bird and who also had this mandolin. Our son was about seven-

teen then. He was very much taken with the Italian, whose name was Marlo, and the two were always together and sang and played so delightfully that it was a joy to hear them. Marlo was a very pleasant, decent fellow, and there was no reason why the two should not be friends. As a matter of fact, they spent all their free time at music. In the shortest time our Melchior had learned to play too; yes, and he soon played much better than his teacher. This is true, because Marlo said so himself. But this made him too fond of music, which began to mean more to him than anything else. Marlo went away after a while, but the mandolin remained, for Melchior had bought it from him. My husband didn't quite approve of music during the day, for Melchior had often to be fetched to the mill from his music. At that time he showed a desire to travel, and we thought travelling and new knowledge in his trade would help him. It was then he left us. He wrote faithfully about the places he visited but nothing about his occupation. After two years my husband wrote to him to come home, and Melchior answered that he couldn't come. He told us the truth for the first time,

namely, that he had been only studying music all these years. As he was anxious to use his knowledge now, he only gave a vague promise to come home some time or other. I remember my husband saying right away that he would never come back. Yes, my husband was so deeply affected by Melchior's letter that the sorrow and anger he felt made him very ill. But I kept up my hope that our son would return and this kept me alive. Melchior still wrote to us from time to time till about fourteen years ago, when he told us that he had settled in Italy. That was his last letter. He must have married there. But I wasn't absolutely wrong when I thought he would return. After all, he meant to come home and bring us his little boy. But we must go now and take Jörli to his grandfather. Oh, I cannot remain here any longer, and you must come with us. You shall be Jörli's second grandfather, and you shall live in the mill with the boy and us."

When Jörli heard this he cried exultantly, "Oh, grandfather, now you know where to go and you won't have to trudge along the road alone. Oh, thank you a thousand times," he exclaimed, embracing his grandmother. In his

joy he could find no other words than, "Oh, I am so glad for grandfather, oh, I am so glad." This he repeated over and over again.

The grandfather had been so overcome by the woman's words that he hardly dared to believe them. Was he really to have a permanent home and suddenly be free of cares? The best of it all was, though, that he was able to remain with his darling Jörli, who belonged to a respected family. All this seemed more than he had ever dared to pray for. The old man stood there, still irresolute. He could not have heard correctly. Just the same, Jörli had understood the situation and flew upstairs to the grandfather's well-known chamber. He took the few clothes he found there and rolled them up into a bundle, one over the other. Then he finally fastened a string around it, flung it over his shoulder and ran down again.

"That is right, Jörli," said the grandmother, delighted; "we must go now."

This at last showed the old man that both were in earnest. After running indoors once more to shake Lene's hand he set out with a heart so overflowing that he ran down the

mountain like a youth. The three reached the inn at Gesteig ever so much sooner than they had expected. "Harness him up quickly," said the miller's wife impatiently, and then she let the brown horse trot as she had never done before. "I can't wait till I get home."

Supper was over in the Stauffer mill. The men had left the room, and the miller had settled down to his solitary little table, but feeling very restless, he rose again and began to walk up and down the room. Suddenly he heard the sound of carriage-wheels. "How can that be?" he said to himself, standing still. "It is impossible! She couldn't be back yet, for she won't give up till she has some news. No, not if she has to drive about the countryside for weeks. I know her." Just the same the carriage came nearer and stopped at the door. The miller went outside. "Stauffer," called out his wife at once, "come here and lift the boy out of the carriage. He belongs to us —he is Melchior's son."

The miller approached in silence. He lifted the boy from the carriage and led him up to the carriage light. "Oh, it's you, Jörli, it's you!"

he said, taking the boy's hand and leading him indoors. Here in the bright light he examined the lad with piercing glances and carefully searched every lineament and feature. But he still said nothing. His wife had entered now, and she was followed by Fretz, the old mountain guide.

"You have no cause to doubt it, Stauffer," said the woman as she approached her husband. "I have absolute proofs that he belongs to us just as Melchior belonged to us."

"I don't doubt it for a moment, woman," answered the miller in a voice bright with happiness. "If some one had come and told me that this was Melchior's son, I should have believed him without a single proof. He is like Melchior in everything and he takes hold of things and handles them exactly as Melchior did. This has often frightened me, for it is the sort of thing they tell in stories. So you are my grandson, Jörli," continued the miller, seizing the lad's hand. "And did you come back gladly to your grandfather and the mill?"

"Oh yes, grandfather, I am ever so glad

to come back again," replied Jörli with happy eyes, "and to grandmother, too."

"I am glad to hear it," said the miller, vigorously shaking the boy's hand. "Come here, grandmother! We must all sit down together and have a feast. Tell them to prepare a meal for us, for now we must make merry together. Then we must hear all that has happened, too. We must show Jörli that he has found a home with his grandparents."

The miller's wife was intensely happy, for her husband had not shown such life and spirit for years. But she did not forget her companion, the guide, who up to now had been standing quietly in a corner. "Here is some one else who must rejoice with us," she said, drawing him forward. "This is Jörli's second grandfather. He raised the boy, and we'll never be able to thank him enough."

The miller took the old man's hand and shook it.

The miller's wife now told the whole story, taking care that the guide got his full share of appreciation for all he had done for her son and Jörli.

After the description of the night on the St. Bernard, a deep silence filled the room, for the woman could not speak for a moment. Here the miller went outside. When he returned he silently pressed the guide's hand, then he sat down beside Jörli. After patting the boy's shoulder a few times he said, "Let us be grateful that you came here where you belong, Jörli. Now quickly tell me what you would like to become in the future?"

"A miller, grandfather," was the prompt reply, "and in a beautiful mill like yours, too, grandfather."

The miller laughed so heartily that his joy proved contagious.

"Just look at that youngster! Doesn't he know a good thing when he sees it! I should say he didn't have his eyes for nothing," he cried out, as the deep furrows on his brow completely vanished. "I'll show you how to drive our brown horse to-morrow, Jörli, and later on you can tackle the four white ones. I want to see the young master of the Stauffer mill driving about the countryside with his horses before long. Let's touch glasses, boy!

Long life to the Stauffer mill and its young master!"

The wife gazed at her husband in astonishment. He looked simply transformed and had grown at least twenty years younger since yesterday. Then she looked again at her Jörli and her eyes took on an expression the boy well understood. Every few moments he seized her hand and said joyously, "Oh, grandmother, you don't know how glad I am that this is really my home now."

All this time the old guide's face had been shining like the sun. Folding his hands, he said, "I wish I'd be allowed to sing a song of praise with Jörli. That would just about suit me, for I should like to tell our Lord in Heaven how full my heart is of gratitude and praise, and I can do this best by singing."

Jörli looked up at his grandfather a little frightened, for he knew that the latter could not endure music. But the miller nodded his head happily and said, "Of course you may sing! If my young miller attends well to his tasks in daytime, he can sing as many hymns to his grandmother in the evening as he wants."

The guide at once began a song, in which his voice sounded very powerful in comparison with Jörli's bell-like tones. The grandmother had slipped the mandolin into Jörli's hands, for she loved the soft music of the strings, which woke in her memories of a happy past. The miller also listened pleased. At the last lines of the song—

> Let all proclaim Thy tender love,
> Both those on earth and those above,
> Who in Thy heavens dwell—

the woman went quietly outside and up to the attic, where she leaned out of the open window and saw the moonlight lying bright on the white road. "Now I won't be able any longer to gaze out and see if he is coming home," she said to herself, looking out over the road, which she had searched every evening for her son. "I know now that he won't come again, dear Lord in Heaven, but I won't complain if only he is in Heaven with You." Here she was obliged to wipe the tears from her cheeks, for she wanted to come back to the others with a happy face.

Next morning when the whole household

was gathered for breakfast, the miller said with a loud voice, "I have to say something which concerns you all, so listen, men! This boy here is my grandson and you are to treat him as the son of the house. I have found out that my son died on his journey home years ago and this splendid man here took the unknown little boy home with him. He raised him in such an honest God-fearing fashion that the boy is a credit to any household. You are to honor and respect this man as the lad's second grandfather."

When the miller lads left the house they hung their heads, for they were sure that the master would send them away as soon as Jörli would tell his grandfather how he had been treated. All expected this to happen at once and, strange to say, Long Kaspar was the most frightened of them all. Jörli, who had been sent to the mill by his grandfather with a message to the lads, went there very timidly. He was afraid that the men would be still more embittered against him now because he was more fortunate than they. But as soon as he entered he found them very considerate and

pleasant. Each wished to do him a special favor, and nothing but friendliness was shown him from all sides in order to conciliate him for their previous roughness. Long Kaspar even showed himself happy when Jörli addressed a few words to him. This change took a great burden from Jörli's heart, for he had been genuinely afraid of the men's possible hostility. In his delight he was as friendly now with them as if he had never had anything to suffer from them. This spirit shown by the young master moved the men so deeply that they actually formed a ring round him and each insisted on shaking hands with Jörli first and genuinely wishing him joy at his return as the young master. When he had left the building, the foreman of the mill said to the others, "We've wronged him and he hasn't shown the slightest resentment. We must do something for him too." He went about deeply meditating all day till he had found the right thing to do. He led all the fellows behind the mill for a rehearsal that evening and a bit later they gathered under the windows of the living-room, where the four members of the family

were sitting together. Then they began to sing lustily:

"All hail to thee, O miller's son,
In this the Stauffer mill!
Thy work thou dost as few have done;
We all acclaim they skill,
And raise a loud hurrah for thee;
A worthy master thou shalt be."

The miller at once opened the window and called them all inside. In his great joy he fetched up something from the cellar, and never since the mill had existed had the workmen had such a treat.

Merriment has once again returned to the Stauffer mill and its inmates; every evening happy songs can be heard floating through the yard, accompanied by the soft tinkle of strings. Not a day passes that the miller does not fetch his wife over to the mill. "Come and see him at work," he always says to her then, for Jörli is his greatest joy and he loves to watch the lad as he goes skilfully from one task to another, always quick and able at whatever he undertakes. The radiant grandmother, too, never can say enough about her grandson's

merits. Whenever she passes the white, bursting bags she never neglects to say to the miller, "Don't forget your promise to me, Stauffer. As soon as you can get away for a few days, we must take the trip up to the St. Bernard. We owe the good monks a big debt and we must thank them. Some of these bags must come along, too, besides a few other things."

If the miller happens to be alone with his wife he always says again, "You have no idea how changed everything is in the mill now. Since Jörli has returned, the lads show such a pleasant spirit; they meet me quite differently too. I actually enjoy my life again, and in the evening when I hear you sing I can't imagine anything more delightful than to listen to you."

"Yes, Stauffer, I know," is the woman's retort, "he who has no grudge in his heart looks at his fellow-creatures quite differently, and up to heaven, too. It is sad that our Melchior couldn't come home to us as he wished to, but he sent us a blessing just the same. This gift of his has reconciled us with the sorrow of the past and we are able to be glad again."

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